



by Yandé Seck
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Fiction

White Clouds *Weiße Wolken*

review

'White Clouds' is an intimate study of a diverse and extended Black German family that addresses complex social issues. It follows three family members as they grapple with their unique stages in life and their distinct identities.

Zazie is a young Black German woman, a member of Gen-Z. She is the daughter of Ulrike, a white 68er who is as dynamic as she is unreliable, and Papis, a Senegalese academic who has settled in Germany and made a living translating Nietzsche but now often feels his daughters are foreign to him. Zazie is political, embracing her Black Diasporic identity. She feels at times that James Baldwin and Roxanne Gay understand her better than her own sister does. She has just completed her MA thesis and aspires to an academic career, but is not quite sure academia is the right place for her. She is also suffering under the weight of family problems and a white boyfriend who is woke when it comes to pop culture, but doesn't always understand her struggles as a Black woman in a white-majority society.

Zazie's older sister, Dieo, is less politically engaged: a child therapist, she has just started a new phase of training to allow her to become self-employed. She is struggling to balance her career with mothering her three biracial sons. She could use more support from her white husband Simon, but he is too wrapped up in his tech bro aspirations to acknowledge her needs.

Simon is the son of an absent father – a documentarian who was more concerned with art and politics than fatherhood, and a vibrant mother interested in intersectional feminism. He may not have any insight into the problems of his marriage, or why Dieo only rarely wants to sleep with him, but he is steadfast and intelligent, and Zazie feels able to confide in him about her worries about their family – especially how generational trauma has them all stuck in pre-determined roles and behaviours that are making them unhappy.

When Papis dies unexpectedly, the laboriously calibrated family structures lose their equilibrium. The sisters travel to their father's homeland for the funeral, and saying goodbye becomes a new beginning for them. Wise, accessible and subtly humorous, Yandé Seck's debut novel shows how intergenerational trauma and racist and sexist structures can make people act in ways they may not always be conscious of.

Find out more here:

<https://www.kiwi-verlag.de/verlag/rights/book/yande-seck-weisse-wolken-9783462004977>

press quotes

Yandé Seck's début is a loving dissection of a black family in a city ... The novel is narrated like a Netflix series about everyday city life; it is pithy and contemporary, full of beautiful dialogue and wise observations.

Stern

For all the weight of her themes – the racism experienced by her protagonist and the oppressive demands of motherhood – Yandé Seck manages to make her writing entertaining, humourous and forgiving. And for all the conflict and struggle, it is a hopeful novel.

hr2-kultur

about the author

Yandé Seck was born in 1986 and lives in Frankfurt am Main with her husband and two children. She works as a psychotherapist for children and teens, teaches at the University of Frankfurt and is studying for a doctorate on motherhood, migration and psychoanalysis. 'White Clouds' is her first novel.

rights information

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